The Reconstructionist

Vol. XIII. December 12, 1947 Kislev 29, 5708 No. 16

אז יאמרו בגוים הגדיל ה' לעשות עם אלה.
הגדיל ה' לעשות עמנו. היינו שמחים:

Then said they among the nations: The Lord hath wrought greatly for these. The Lord hath wrought greatly for us, where-for we rejoice.

Psalm 126: 2-3.

Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Israel's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

is published bi-weekly for twenty consecutive issues, starting in October, by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., 15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y. Subscription $2.00 per year; 10c per copy; foreign 25c extra; membership in the Foundationn, $5.00 per year, including subscription to *The Reconstructionist*. Reentered as second class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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announces its

ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE
SUNDAY EVENING, JANUARY 4, 1948
at 8:00 O'clock
at the building of
THE SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM
15 West 86th Street, New York City.

PROGRAM OF THE CONFERENCE

THE AUTHOR MEETS THE CRITICS

The Author: MORDECAI M. KAPLAN
The Book: "THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN JEW"
The Critics: MORTIMER J. COHEN, EMANUEL GAMORAN, DAVID PETEGORSKY

Moderator: IRA EISENSTEIN

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The establishment of the Jewish State makes it imperative to consider NOW new directions for American Jewish living, the relationship of American Jewry to Eretz Yisrael and the responsibility of American Jewry to the civilization of the United States. These subjects, which are the contents of the book, will be discussed by the critics.

THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME!

The Reconstructionist

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EDITORIALS

AT LAST!

"Layehudim hayetah orah ve-simhah. . . ."

THERE was dancing on the streets in New York, Buenos Aires, Dublin and Cape Town. Jews sang and cheered in all the far-flung cities of the *golah,* for at last, at long last, the nations of the world had declared that a Jewish state should arise on the ancestral soil of Eretz Yisrael.

The messianic dream had come true, but not without the predicted pangs. The United Nations Assembly met, and met again, and still again, poised for the final vote, each time thwarted by maneuvers and strategy of delay. At the final moment, on Saturday, November 29th (Kislev 16), a memorable date—the Arab nations tried one last, desperate attack, designed to postpone action until the winter.

Then Senor Aranha, of Brazil, stepped into his historic role. He saved the Jewish people from unthinkable chaos and suffering. If he had ruled that the proposal for postponement had priority over the resolution presented by the *ad hoc* committee on Palestine, the entire question would have been left hanging perilously for months, while violence grew and passions became further inflamed. Israel may well *"bentch gomel"* for the chairman's decision.

No less frightful would have been the result of a vote with an inadequate majority. If the nations had not rallied at the last moment, if our own American government had not stirred itself to action, no one can say what the consequences might have been. Again, *"gomel"* is in order.

Turning from the hideous possibilities of failure to the actuality of success, our hearts are filled with a gratitude too deep to be expressed in song and dance, too enmeshed with the sorrow and the long exile to be free enough to flow quickly and easily into outward expression. The traditional *"she-he-hiyanu"* is more suitable. The day calls for prayer, and psalm, and a tear.

Do we really know what we have lived to see? Does the realization truly dawn on us? We cannot comprehend the full significance of the moment, though it has been approaching these last decades. We all knew, somehow, that the time would come when political sovereignty would be granted. But now that it is here, do we understand what a revolution it will entail in all our thinking and acting,

in our communal organization and objectives, in our education and our religious worship?

In the coming years we shall come to know just how far the new state will transform our lives as Jews. But of one thing we are certain, even at this early date—that Eretz Yisrael, the common dream of all Israel, the common enterprise of all Israel, will remain the common heritage of all Israel. Of one glorious and potent fact we are aware now: that the Jewish people is, and must remain, one and indivisible. Nothing must be done, either in the new state or in the Diaspora, that shall alienate one organ of the body of Israel from another.

American Jewry particularly, which played so influential a part in bringing about the Jewish state, has an abiding stake in the land. It was the privilege of American Jews to help bring Eretz Yisrael to its present stature. It must be their responsibility to continue to assist the infant state, especially through the first years.

Recently, Dr. Weizmann, speaking at a reception in his honor, compared the situation of the new state to that of a young (he shrugged his shoulders—"Young?"—) couple, just married, who are moving into an empty flat. They have no furniture, no dishes, no linens. . . . The new state, he said, will need industries, railroads, government agencies, a merchant marine . . . they will need and need and need. American Jewry has the means, and the skills, and the rich resources of personality to supply those needs.

In the strictly political sense, the new state will not be ours. In every other sense, and to the full, it will be ours and our children's wherever they may dwell.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

THE Executive Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations at a recent meeting entertained a proposal to change the name of that organization to the Union of Liberal Synagogues. No final action could be taken on the proposal. It will be circularized among the constituent congregations and again considered at a subsequent meeting. If approved, it will then be submitted for adoption to the next biennial convention of the Union.

When a well established and influential organization considers changing its name, it gives evidence of a new orientation in its aims. This does not necessarily mean a repudiation of its past career, but a recognition that, in the light of present realities, some change in direction is necessary in order to carry on its fundamental purpose. The meagre newspaper account of the meeting does not give much of a clue to the significance of the proposed alteration of name. But our own observation of recent tendencies in Reform circles enables us to understand some of the considerations which may have given rise to the proposal.

According to the story in the New York *Times* of November 24th, Rabbi James G. Heller, chairman of the committee that suggested the new name "declared it to be the consensus of his committee that the word 'liberal' would approximate more nearly the original intent of the founders of the movement and would be more consistent with the aims of the present movement." In interpreting this statement we would say that "the original intent of the founders" of Reform was to preserve Judaism, by taking cognizance of the need for adjusting it to the new conditions created by the Emancipation. Reform thus recognized the need for progress, for making such changes as would enable Juda-

ism to benefit by the experiences of the living generation and release it from bondage to the past. That attitude is not only progressive; it is also, in the true sense, "liberal," implying, as it does, full freedom of conscience.

There is a tendency, however, among liberal movements that have met with a measure of success, to develop an orthodoxy of their own, to assume the validity and the sufficiency of the innovations in thought and practice, which originated with them in their initial stages even in the face of new evidence to the contrary. They are inclined to resent further change, particularly any change that involves a retraction of tenets once held incontestable. It is to the credit of the Reform rabbinate that it has fought this tendency to make of the theories and practices of the pioneers of Reform a new dogmatic orthodoxy. Most Reform rabbis in our day have realized and have assisted their congregations to realize the new values offered by such movements as Zionism, the revival of the Hebrew language and culture, and recent developments in social democracy. They did not permit themselves to be deterred from modifying their doctrines and practices in accordance with their new insights. In a word, they asserted their liberalism, remaining true at the same time to the fundamentals of their movement as stated above. Now they want approval of their liberal attitude by the adoption of the word "Liberal" in the name of the organization.

This is the primary significance of the suggested change. An analysis of some of the implications of the old name reveals more clearly the reasons for wanting to change it. The term "Hebrew" in the old name is significant. It did not mean a devotion to the Hebrew language, the importance of which Reform tended to minimize in its early days. It meant a revolt against being called "Jew." The term Jew was applied also to the despised Jews of the Ghetto whose adherence to traditional practices was deemed a bar to the political and social emancipation of Jews. Reform Jews of that generation had the naive notion that, by dissociating themselves in name from the Jews of the ghetto, they would command greater respect in the eyes of the Gentiles. So they called themselves Hebrews or Israelites. They also changed the designation of their house of worship from "synagogue" to "temple," since the name synagogue was associated with the places where ghetto Jews worshiped.

The full force of this choice of nomenclature by the early Reformers can be best illustrated by a historic incident. At the Congress of Berlin, in 1878, King Leopold II of Belgium, tried to influence the Russian chancellor, Prince Gortschakoff, to improve the lot of the Russian Jews. The chancellor replied: "That is not as easy as you think, sir. In your country you have Israelites; in Russia we have Jews."

The progressive leaders of Reform Judaism in America do not want to stress their revolt against the ghetto, for the ghetto no longer exists. They want rather to stress their continuity with the Jewish past and to salvage those values inherited from the ghetto era which, in their opinion, can be made relevant to Jewish living in America. Nor do they want to consider themselves as a separate sect isolated from the rest of *kelal yisrael*. They do not want to pattern Reform after the Protestant Reformation, which created an irreparable breach in the unity of Christendom. They aspire to be the liberal religious wing of the Jewish people, loyal to the peoplehood of Israel and tolerant of other interpretations of Judaism than their own. They want to cooperate with other Jewish groups in all the

common interests of Jews—in building up Eretz Yisrael, in defending Jewish rights, in advancing Jewish culture, etc.

We hope that those Reform Jews who want Reform to be liberal in the true sense of the word will succeed in effecting the proposed change. Let them not be deterred by mere sentimental attachment to the old name, or by the fear that a change of name might imply a lack of reverence for the early leaders of the movement. Let them rather emulate those leaders in insisting on a forthright expression of their present liberal attitudes in the very naming of their congregational union.

FEAR BREEDS HYSTERIA

THE prevailing mood in the United States today is fear. There is fear of war, fear of depression, fear of communism, fear of increased immigration, fear of minority groups. This is a very strange atmosphere in a country which was on the winning side of a global war and which is acknowledged to be the strongest, most powerful and most prosperous nation in the world. But even more incomprehensible is our utter failure to treat realistically the causes underlying our fears.

We fear expansion of communism in Europe and Asia. Theferore we adopt a "get tough with Russia" policy in foreign affairs. We fear the tiny segment of Communist Party members and Communist sympathizers in America. So we countenance the antics of the House Committee on Un-American Activities as a means of combating them. We seem not to see the grave threat to civil liberties which the Committee itself constitutes. One of the most fantastic and most dangerous of the investigations of this Committee is its recent examination of so-called Communist control in Hollywood. It is fantastic because Hollywood, perhaps more than any of our opinion-forming agencies, has been cautious in considering controversial issues. It is dangerous because the Committee may, if its powers remain undefined and its activity uncurbed, follow this investigation with an incursion into the press, the radio, the publishing industry, religious institutions, schools, colleges. Nothing and no one will be free from its inquisition. The same excuse will be used for each operation, namely, the American way of life is endangered by the existence of subversive influences. What constitutes a subversive influence is nebulously interpreted. Thus does fascism, under the guise of anti-communism, don the protective coloring of the American flag.

The Hollywood hearings were not only undignified and fruitless. The methods of the people's representatives in intimidating witnesses were execrable. A cardinal principle of Anglo-Saxon justice is that a man is presumed to be innocent until he is proven guilty. The ten film personalities, who were accused of subtly inserting subversive material into pictures and stories, were presumed to be guilty of disloyalty to their country. They were never given the opportunity to offer evidence of their innocence. When they refused to answer questions as to their political beliefs, claiming this demand to be an invasion of their constitutional rights, the Committee cited them for contempt. The House of Representatives confirmed these citations. The Committee justifies its proceedings by declaring that a Congressional investigation need not abide by the rules of judicial procedure. By such reasoning, anything and anyone may be the subject of Congressional inquiry without being granted any protection against irretrievable damage.

The results of the Congressional Committee's smearing of Hollywood can al-

ready be seen. The Committee did not ferret out communists nor did it disclose that any considerable number of communists exist in the film colony. But it did an excellent job of intimidating the film executives. These men, most of them always wary about injecting controversial issues into films, will take very good care that nothing concerning the problems facing our society shall creep into any future production. We may not see pictures like "Gentleman's Agreement" or "Crossfire," or other features dealing with social problems. Instead we may, perhaps, expect a deluge of "Forever Ambers" or "Hit Parades," provided the Legion of Decency gives its consent. The film producers, fearing a loss of box office receipts and worried about the Communist label, have, in effect, invited that which they fear most of all—censorship.

We hold no brief for avowed communists or fascists. We would remind our readers, however, that the Communist Party has not been outlawed. We cannot subscribe to any totalitarian doctrine since such authoritarianism is antithetical to the dignity of the individual and to freedom of thought. We abhor, particularly, those totalitarians who would use the democratic process to destroy democracy. But we maintain that the current hysteria in our country which causes everything departing from the ordinary or the usual to be labelled "Communist" is dangerous and destructive.

This present quasi-madness can be easily used to promote anti-Semitism. We, American Jews, must never forget that it was as a crusade against communism that fascism came to Italy, to Germany and to other countries. We must remember what happens to so vulnerable and so easily identifiable a scapegoat as the Jewish minority. Our fellow Americans, too, must recall that fascism brought in its wake misery, terror, expropriation and war. In fighting the alleged danger of communism in America by intimidation and suppression, we risk the possibility of installing fascism.

The threat of communism and fascism can be met in only one way—by more democracy. Those who conjure up an unreal emergency as a pretext for violating civil liberties, strike at the roots of our democracy. They must be checked. There is a movement afoot to surround those testifying before Congressional committees with many of the safeguards against prosecution which are applied in court procedure. That movement should receive support from all who abhor fascism and who revere the American tradition of personal liberty under law.

REALITIES AND VALUES

THE REJOICING OVER THE achievement of statehood in at least a part of Palestine may be somewhat tempered for many by the thought of how tiny that state is, only about half of the size of Vermont. Can so small a state afford opportunity for the resettlement of all those Jews who need to be resettled?

These doubters may find reassurance in the statement of so cautious an economic expert as Robert Nathan. He estimates that the projected Jewish state could, within a decade, absorb a total of 1,000,000 more Jews, bringing the Jewish population up to 2,000,000.

Of course, that will be contingent on the investment of considerable capital in the land. He judges the amount needed to be $3,000,000,000. But, with the new opportunities opened up by a mass settlement under friendly auspices, it should not be difficult to secure $3,000,000 annually for the next ten years from public

and private funds, to invest in a paying proposition.

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JORGE GARCIA GRANADOS, Guatamalan member of UNSCOP, speaking at the dinner in celebration of Balfour Day in New York, commented on the remarkable revival of Hebrew in Eretz Yisrael, on the fact that "all Jews speak Hebrew."

What is perhaps more remarkable to a Jewish visitor from America is the fact that, although all Jews speak Hebrew, all of them who have had the equivalent of a public school education can also speak English and Arabic and many of them, in addition can speak Yiddish and one or more European or Asiatic languages as well.

We stress this because it should help to correct a popular American superstition, one that is a result of the cultural "isolationism" of America, viz., that it is impossible for the average person to learn to speak more than one language.

We doubt whether that cultural isolationism can maintain itself in the shrinking modern world any better than political isolationism. It certainly need not, at least for American Jews. Eretz Yisrael is no farther from America than America is from Eretz Yisrael, and, if the Jews of the Homeland can learn to speak English in addition to Hebrew, the Jews of America can learn to speak Hebrew in addition to English. It may be harder, because of environmental conditions, but it is possible.

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IF WE BELIEVE, AS MOST JEWS and all Reconstructionists believe, that the new Jewish state is destined to be the cultural and spiritual center of world Jewry, we will want more than ever to establish personal ties between Jews in the Homeland and in the Diaspora.

It is therefore timely to call attention to a service inaugurated many years ago by the Jewish National Fund. That service, called "Palestine Pen-Pals," arranges for exchange of letters between Jewish children in the Diaspora and in Eretz Yisrael.

Those who wish to write to Pen-Pals should address their request to Avi-Dan, Jewish National Fund, P. O. Box 283, Jerusalem, stating the age and sex of the correspondent desired and giving any other relevant particulars.

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WE QUOTE THE FOLLOWING from a short article entitled "Kosher . . . and Jewish Education" which appears in *The Junior Citizen,* a bulletin published for the parents and children of four Orthodox Jewish schools in New York City.

"Through the tissues of the animals we *eat,* our brains may be influenced to acquire some of the habits and attributes of the animals whose flesh it was." We wonder whether the author of this pearl of wisdom ever asked himself just what habits and attributes he acquired by eating the flesh of the kosher cattle, fowl and fish that appeared on his table.

There are good reasons that may be advanced for observing *kashrut,* but the reason offered in this "educational" bulletin would, in our judgment, be a good reason for *not* entrusting the education of one's child to institutions that teach such nonsense.

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AN EVENT IN THE CULTURAL life of American Jewry is the organization of Friends of Choral Art, Inc., which sponsors the Vinaver Chorus, a distinguished choral group whose performances have won high praise from music critics in the American and the foreign press.

The list of honorary sponsors includes not only distinguished musicians and con-

(*Continued on Page* 14)

Whither, the Jewish Family Agency?

By SAMUEL C. KOHS

THE following comments represent a brief presentation of a new point of view on the future possible objectives of the Jewish family agency.

The material represents only a rough and hurried presentation of the main ideas, and is divided into four sections:

(A) Changes which have occurred in Jewish Family Agency structure and function;

(B) The four most important Jewish communal organizations involved;

(C) What are the Jewish needs which require radical changes in the objectives, the program and the techniques of the Jewish Family Agency;

(D) In what manner should the Jewish Family Agency adapt itself to these new Jewish needs?

A. Changes in the Jewish Family Agency

Nothing happens haphazard. Developments and changes in Jewish social work are the direct result of the impact of changing conditions, and the influence of new forces and new movements which give it its present-day complexion and character.

As far as the Jewish family agency is concerned, its structure and function today are much more the result of Christian and of so-called "non-sectarian" pressures than of Jewish tradition, of the needs of Jewish community life and the demands of the organized Jewish community. The Jewish Family Agency, therefore, currently represents the *only* important Jewish communal activity, utterly unrelated to those objectives which have been the basis for "distinctiveness" not only in Jewish religious life, but in all Jewish communally supported secular organizations, such as the Hebrew School, the Jewish Center, the child care agency, the Home for the Aged, the vocational guidance and placement service, yes, even the Jewish hospital. Only the Jewish family agency, is becoming more and more of a stranger in the association of Jewish communal organizations—with a vanishing interest in problems of Jewish life, in problems of Jewish adjustment, and in positively motivated objectives toward the preservation and the enrichment of Jewish individual and group life.

This situation raises the very legitimate question: If this change in the Jewish family agency is necessary and desirable, should it then any longer be a *Jewish* community responsibility? Should it not depart from the Jewish scene and become the responsibility of the general community?

On the other hand, if there *is* a place for a *Jewish* family agency in any Jewish communal program, then what should be its objectives, what should be its structure and function, and how should it be related to all the other distinctively Jewish community organizations?

Any scientific approach to a problem cannot overlook its biographical or historical aspects. Work with Jewish families, at different periods in this country may be described as follows:

Before 1800

Whatever services were rendered to Jewish individuals and families in the earliest days of Jewish settlements in this country were based on Jewish traditional practices which had a distinctive charac-

ter and were motivated by principles and values drawn from Jewish religious writings and codes: from the Bible, the Talmud, the Commentaries, Maimonides and Karo. Family service was a function of the religious life of the community, the term "religious" being broadly conceived.

1800-1890

During this period Jewish communities grew in size, and the family service committees of synagogues became detached, and developed a secular character, though not without a continuation of the same motivations and patterns of work as before, with distinctive Jewish content and with close relationship to the religious institutions of the community.

1890-1914

This was the period of the great Russian and East European Jewish mass immigration into this country. It was characterized by the merging of Jewish relief giving agencies and the appearance of case work as a professional technique. Although the efforts to Americanize and assimilate the new immigrants were successful, the new immigration resisted the melting pot and continued to maintain interest in Jewish matters: in religion, Yiddish, Zionism and other aspects of Jewish ethnic existence.

1914-1930

Case-work in this period reached its maximum development. Psychiatry began exercising a powerful influence toward changing the focus and the treatment in the case-work process. The *individual,* his problems and needs, emerged as the special object of the case-worker's attention, rather than his family, or his environment, *per se.* In this concentration upon the individual and his emotional problems, the orientation was away from all of the *cultural* implications of an individual's existence, and were directed exclusively to his traumatic experiences, primarily sexual in the broadest sense, — and to curing the frustration of all those inner compulsions toward happiness in one's life work, satisfaction in one's social relations, and contentment in one's development and exercise of special abilities and talents.

If any Jewish aspects whatsoever become apparent in the psychiatric treatment process, these are purely incidental and accidental, and the case-workers approach to the item is no different whether she be Jewish or not, culturally-oriented or not. The individual, as a non-sectarian being, is actually under treatment. There is no *Jewish* content in the treatment program, and certainly the case-worker avoids any possible "contamination" that might result in attempting to relate the individual somehow, to the *Jewish* community and to *Jewish* family life as such. Some will maintain that "good psychiatric practice says: *It's against the law to do that!*" And who wants to be a criminal by choice?

1930-1947

With the taking over of the relief needs of families by the public and social security agencies, the entire field of family welfare services has gone over to the psychiatric case-work camp. Jewish agencies are increasingly serving non-Jewish clients because there are no visible or even invisible sectarian elements present in the process, and with fee-charging, following the opening of family-service offices on the Park Avenues and the "swanky" neighborhoods, there is not a single identifiable trace of any Jewish content in the program, — except in the name of the agency itself, which has become meaningless. Essentially, there is no difference whatsoever, in New York City, for example, in the case-work treatment

of families, whether Jewish or not, by the Jewish Family Service Society, or by the so-called non-sectarian Community Service Society. Both compete for clients: Jewish and non-Jewish, — both have Jewish and non-Jewish workers on their staffs, and both seemingly satisfy the needs of Jews as well as non-Jews.

Conclusion:

The conclusion should be obvious. Jewish family agencies as they function today, neither justify their existence as *Jewish* agencies, nor are legitimately entitled to continuing support exclusively from Jewish funds. They have no Jewish content. Their work bears no relation to problems of Jewish life and adjustment, nor to any positive Jewish philosophy or outlook. Nor do they have any relation whatsoever to the programs in the Jewish community making for a strengthening of the Jewish "clan," and for providing the Jewish individual and the Jewish family with those assets which build Jewish dignity, Jewish self-respect, and inner Jewish security and strength.

B. Four Communal Agencies for Helping Jews Maintain Their Identity

In one form or another, the four most important Jewish communal agencies which traditionally have helped the Jew maintain his identity, aided in preserving a Jewish outlook and way of life, have been the synagogue, the Jewish educational agency, the Jewish community center, and the Jewish family agency.

These four organizations, by their inter-relationship, not only give meaning and distinctiveness to Jewish life, but attempt to preserve, enrich and advance our cultural heritage.

In the medieval period when the synagogue served as the central force of organized Jewish communal life, all of these activities were employed in and radiated out of the synagogue.

In present day America centrifugal forces have made for a separation, but only in the case of the Jewish family agency has the break been complete and absolute as well as irreparable.

It is interesting, also, to call attention to the fact that the synagogue, the Hebrew school and the Jewish center cater primarily to *individuals* in the family unit and not to the family as a whole. Before psychiatry effected its reorientation of family case work, the family welfare agency was the only communal organization that served the family as a whole or as a unit.

With the Jewish family agency gone from the *Jewish* scene, no communal agency exists to concern itself with the problems of *Jewish family* life.

The synagogue breaks up the family into father, mother and children, and ministers to each separately, except on festival occasions such as Passover, Sukkot and similar family holidays. But throughout the year, possibly the father comes for Friday night services, the mother for Sabbath morning services, and the children for Sunday school. Religiously the family does not exist as a unit continuously.

The Talmud Torah, or the Hebrew school, or the Jewish educational society, is predominantly an agency for those below the Confirmation age. Here and there attempts have been made for the development of institutes of Jewish study, but these have been primarily for adults. Jewish education inevitably involves the classification and separate treatment of children according to age, which tends to make it impossible to serve the family as a unit, except on special occasions such as holidays and festivals.

The Jewish community center, with its greater variety of appealing interests and

activities is in a worse situation than either the synagogue or the Hebrew school in the effort to deal with the family and serve it *as a unit.* With all the content that a Jewish community center might provide for different members of a family: the father of 56, who prefers the health club above everything else and occasionally an interesting and entertaining lecture; the mother of 50, who is very much over-weight and delights in the special program for weight reducing and figure control, is also interested in Hadassah and the Council of Jewish Women; the young adult son of 30, who graduated college and obtained his law degree and is employed in the office of a prominent local attorney, is interested in dramatics, basketball and AZA; and finally a daughter of 24, unmarried, who is a member of the Jewish center symphony orchestra and enjoys no other activities besides social dances on Saturday evening. Each of these members secures some advantages of Jewish value or significance in the Jewish center, but even although all of them are adults, the nature of their interests and their activities is such as to make impossible service to this family on a *family unit* basis.

Only a Jewish family agency, were such in existence and functioning, could really meet this responsibility. And the responsibility could be stated as helping the synagogue, the Talmud Torah and the Jewish center achieve, through the instrumentality of the Jewish family agency, the type of integration and unification of these varied programs which each fails to accomplish individually. This would not only mean a re-orientation in the conception of what a Jewish family agency should be, but also would involve the agency's relating itself to the needs of the synagogue, the Hebrew school and the Jewish center, in order to assist in achieving the objectives for which all of these three communal agencies stand.

How best this might be done, will be presented in detail in Section D.

C. What Is the Need?

First, at no other period in the history of the Jews in this country, has there been as much self-hate manifested, such warped and distorted reactions to anti-Semitism, and such personal and group demoralization, as is manifested in various methods of escape: changes of name, inter-marriage, lying about Jewish extraction, and the convenient subterfuge of carrying on a business with the Jewish proprietors hidden under such business designations as the Green Front Dry Goods Company; Ketchum, Killam and Henderson; the Golden Rule Market, etc. Of course, such names are not at all illegitimate and very frequently are used by non-Jews. Witness the Standard Oil Co., United States Steel, General Motors, etc. It would not be surprising, however, to find that this tendency is much greater within the Jewish group than within any other.

Secondly, and as a reverse tendency, increasingly Jews and Jewish families, by virtue of outside pressure, current events, or by the pressures exerted upon them by their children, are seeking and are desirous of assistance in order to make their lives and their homes richer and more meaningful in terms of Jewish content, Jewish functioning and Jewish relationships, on a *family* as well as on an *individual* basis.

Whatever benefit the synagogue, the Talmud Torah and the Jewish center may bestow upon an individual in terms of making his life richer and more meaningful as a Jew, there is no communal instrumentality to bring together and to unify these influences *within the Home.*

As in the case of the shift to psychiatry

and fee charging services, it equally should be the responsibility of the Jewish agency to prepare a brochure setting forth its interest and its desire to meet this new responsibility as above indicated. This brochure should be widely distributed, so that it reaches every Jewish home. It should set forth clearly the new orientation and the new objectives.

It is obvious that, before any family agency would have the courage or the inclination to undertake such a test of community sentiment, it must be prepared with proper content and methodology in order to meet the challenge, for the challenge would certainly come.

It is hoped that some far-sighted executive of a Jewish family agency, somewhere in the United States, will recognize the need and will have the understanding and the will to serve the Jewish community as it should be served by his agency. This will mean at least a one year's preparation in advance, in order to provide the re-orientation necessary and to develop the techniques that would be involved.

D. How Should the Jewish Family Agency Re-Orient Itself to Meet This Need?

In order more adequately to comprehend the problem, the presentation of two family situations may be helpful.

Family A: This is a case of intermarriage, the wife being non-Jewish. Having "accepted" the Jewish community, she is eager to bring into the home the kind of atmosphere and the traditions which give Jewish family life the color and the content that are of such importance, culturally and socially. Children are born, grow up, reach maturity, and the interest of the family continues throughout the entire period in the effort to supplement what each individual member of the family gains from the synagogue, the Hebrew school and the Jewish center. Besides encouraging interest in Jewish music, Jewish literature, the celebration of Jewish festivals and other occasions of religious or cultural importance, the Jewish family agency, on the basis of the initial request of the family, assists in the integration of all these forces and influences, in order to assure that the cultural content and the ethnic color which the family originally requested will be provided.

This emphasis upon Jewish content in the Jewish home does not imply that in all other respects this home should not be just as American as all other homes, Jewish and non-Jewish. All that is asked for is the utilization of those cultural elements which have given the Jewish group its distinctiveness, and the benefits of which can so greatly enrich human personality—that these be not discarded as worthless.

Family B: The paternal grandparents are Orthodox, living with the head of the family and his wife, who are Conservative, and with four of their children, two of whom are inclined to Reform affiliations and the other two who look upon their Jewish origin as a terrific handicap, the burden of which they wish to throw off at the earliest opportunity.

The head of the family has known that the Jewish family agency is becoming interested in such a cultural conflict problem as is presented in this family.

One cannot write a prescription as easily for this kind of a complicated family. There is not a single Jewish communal agency that functions on a family basis, which would be in a position to give this family any real constructive help. To that extent the Jewish family agency has failed to recognize and to meet that obligation to the Jewish community. We have chased the false god of techniques without recognzing that this chase was taking us away more and more

from Jewish life and from the needs of our people.

In the case of Family B, there are the Orthodox needs of the grand-parents which must be recognized and dealt with; the needs of the head of the family and his wife who are anxious to maintain a meaningful relationship to Jewish life and its values; two of the children who do not wish to effect separation, and the two others whose attachment to their family is emotionally disturbing and which must undoubtedly prove a traumatic experience.

What does one do under these circumstances? Has the Jewish community any responsibility? Can any technique be developed to serve this family's needs and those of the Jewish community as a whole, in relation to this particular family?

Were space available, a larger series of Jewish family situations could be presented, indicating the extent to which a Jewish family agency might find a rich field of usefulness in these troubled times.

One cannot come full fledged with a set of techniques and their application to a group such as this unless one has carefully surveyed the need, experimented with a significant number of typical samples, — and then developed out of that experience the kind of practice that these needs seem to dictate.

If we are to entertain any hope for the preservation and the advancement of *Jewish* life in this country, we must not only do all we can to strengthen and make more effective our religious institutions, our Jewish educational agencies, our Jewish community centers, but pressure must be exerted upon our Jewish family agencies, so that they are brought back into the family of Jewish organizations whose only reason for existence is to preserve and make more meaningful those Jewish values and those culture components which have given the Jewish people their character and their *raison d'etre* throughout the ages.

Unless that happens, the sooner the so-called Jewish family agencies are discarded as a Jewish responsibility, the sooner will large Jewish sums, running into millions of dollars, become available for other uses which have a more direct bearing on the preservation, the enrichment and the strengthening of Jewish life in America. In a word, it is time for American Jewry to issue this challenge to the Jewish family agency: Either you become part of the pattern of Jewish life in this country, with a program that is closely integrated with those of all other Jewish organizations, religious and secular, which are concerned with the preservation and the advancement of Jewish life, and aim to deal with the *Jewish* aspects of family and social adjustment,— *or go out of business* and let the over-all, so-called non-sectarian community family agency which operates on a non-sectarian basis, is motivated by non-sectarian objectives, and has a "non-sectarian" staff, do the job—and perhaps, even do this *non-sectarian* job better!

REALITIES AND VALUES

(*Continued from Page* 8)

noisseurs of music but leaders in Jewish religious and communal life as well.

For the current season it presents the Vinaver Chorus in a series of four concerts on the following themes: "The Bible in Music," "Music of the Synagogue," "Music of the Hasidim," and "Music of Palestine."

As we are told by the music critic of *The New York Times*, "The Vinaver Chorus brings to the local concert field a repertory that is virtually unknown and one that merits wider public acquaintance."

The Death of Ashmedai

By BERNARD BRACHYA COHEN

EVEN when I was a child Uncle had a sad face. And as I watched his gaunt body hunched over his glass of tea at the head of our dining room table, I observed that the constant sadness was etched more deeply than ever into his dark features. Uncle always seemed old, but now he was really an old man.

He was a rare and strange guest and the maid removed the dinner dishes with extra caution. We had all finished and the dining room was quiet. Out of awed respect for Uncle, Davey suppressed his usual chatter. My wife and I suspended our conversation and we waited for Uncle, who was slowly sipping his tea.

It was a visit from Uncle. I tried to capture the full flavor of the occasion. I wondered if Davey could in any way fathom its magnitude. And I knew he couldn't, for Davey was far too young. Uncle could be authentically appreciated only through the perspective of time.

"Tonight we will have a visit from Uncle," my father used to say, rubbing his hands together and smiling down at us. My two brothers, my sister, and I, would look at each other with knowing glances. A visit from Uncle was a treat. He always brought us candy, but far more exciting and permanent were the wonderful stories he told.

My father had a tender affection for his brother. Uncle's wife had died in an accident less than a year after their marriage and he remained a widower for the rest of his life.

We would sit about the long table and listen silently as my father and Uncle discussed family problems and world affairs. Soon the meal would end. We sat, waiting expectantly. Then Uncle would take his knife and play with the bread crumbs on the table cloth, carefully hoeing them into one line, then another.

"Nu . . . would you like to hear a story?" he would ask suddenly.

Four small heads would nod vigorously. Father chuckled and mother smiled. And the story would begin.

Sometimes it was about David, and how he fooled Saul, or how Alexander the Great flew on an eagle. And then there were the stories about the destruction of the wonderful Temple in Jerusalem; how the swallows tried to extinguish the flames by carrying water in their beaks, and how the priests, clothed in their robes, stood on the roof of the burning building and handed the keys back to God, who stretched a mighty hand down from heaven to receive them.

But the best stories of all were about Ashmedai, King of the Demons. Uncle knew every exploit, every connivance, and every defeat of this legendary villain. He would hold us in a frightened rapture as he recounted the awesome adventures of the King of the Demons.

"Ashmedai stretched his wings," he would say in his soft voice: "One wing reached heaven and the other touched earth."

And four small mouths would drop open as we stared at Uncle in wonder.

He would tell how King Solomon struggled with Ashmedai. The King of the Demons was trapped by being tricked into drinking up a well filled with wine and falling asleep. But Ashmedai revenged himself. When brought before King Solomon, he stretched his wings and threw Solomon four hundred miles out of his

kingdom. Then Ashmedai disguised himself as the King, fooling everyone. But Solomon finally overcame him, and with the aid of his magic ring he forced Ashmedai and his demons to assist in the building of the great Temple in Jerusalem.

And then, much to our regret, Uncle would tell us that his stories would be continued on his next visit.

Uncle finished his tea and put down the empty glass. He took his knife and played with the crumbs on the table cloth, just as he had done when I was a child. The fingers were older but the lines of crumbs were the same.

He looked at Davey and smiled.

"Nu — would you like to hear a story?"

My young son looked at me, his brown eyes reflecting uncertainty. He had never heard one of Uncle's stories.

"Of course Davey wants to hear a story," I said. My wife gave Uncle a smile of approval.

I too wanted to hear the story. It had been so long since I heard a story from Uncle. Seeing the old man again made me recall vividly the warm charm of his stories. I was going to have the rare treat of reliving a cherished memory.

He carefully formed a triangle out of the bread crumbs, then looked at Davey.

I looked at Davey, too, and was annoyed. The child was squirming in his chair. I remembered the eagerness and wrapt attention that always greeted Uncle's offer to tell a story. And even now, more than twenty years later, I was still as anxious as ever to hear one of his stories, and that wonderful feeling of anticipation was being reborn within me.

Yet Davey was restless. He was twisting his small body with obvious annoyance. Uncle looked at my little son and there was puzzlement in his soft eyes.

I glared at Davey. He caught my silent rebuke and stiffened in his chair.

"Uncle is going to tell you a story," my wife said, smiling down at him. She ran her fingers through his little brown ringlets. But he refused to nestle back in the crook of her arm, as he always did.

Uncle looked at Davey and still there was puzzlement in his soft eyes.

"Nu—would you like to hear a story?"

Davey hesitated for a fraction of a second, then nodded his curly head.

Uncle smiled. His smile was warm. He was trying to strengthen his friendship with the little boy who was difficult to please.

"Do you know the story of Ashmedai?"

Davey shook his head.

Uncle launched into his best story of all, the amazing adventures of Ashmedai. It was the story that my brothers and sister and I had begged him to tell, over and over and over again, when we were Davey's age, sitting around the long dining room table.

I listened and felt pathos in the telling of the tale. Uncle had selected Ashmedai, the best story of all, and he was trying to tell it in the best way he could. There was a new element in the story, something that had never existed when I was a child. Uncle was consciously trying to do a good job. He was the old actor going through his best lines with exaggerated emphasis, trying to move the audience that was slipping from his grasp.

I felt bitter toward my little son. Why wasn't his very being centered on Uncle, as was mine when I was a child. Why was he gazing at the grandfather's clock in the corner of the room, then at the water pitcher on the table, then again at the clock, making Uncle intensify his efforts in the struggle to capture his interest?

And Uncle's best story, the story of Ashmedai, King of the Demons. . . .

I gasped involuntarily as I saw Davey's lips curl downward and his small nostrils quiver. He twisted his body into his mother's arms and broke out sobbing.

Uncle stopped telling how Ashmedai could stretch one wing to heaven and the other to earth. The old man stared at the child, dumbfounded.

"What's the matter, Davey!" my wife exclaimed. "Tell mother what's the matter, dear."

"It's . . . it's seven-thirty, and 'The Lone Ranger' is on," he wailed. "I gotta listen to 'The Lone Ranger.' "

He turned around sniffling and rubbed his wet eyes with his fists. My wife gave me a glance of helplessness.

"All right, dear," she said. "Say 'excuse me' to Uncle and you may leave the table."

He said a hurried "excuse me" as he got up from the table. He stepped quickly into the living room and ran upstairs to his radio.

Uncle was making straight lines out of the bread crumbs on the table cloth.

"You'll have to excuse Davey's behavior," my wife said feebly. "He never misses 'The Lone Ranger.' That's why he was so restless—he was afraid he'd miss his program."

Uncle smiled. "I understand."

The sad resignation in Uncle's smile hurt me. I knew he couldn't understand. I wanted to tell him that his stories were as good as ever, but that Davey felt he had heroes that were far more powerful than David and Alexander and Solomon. His heroes had silver bullets and secret codes and superhuman powers. Through the inexhaustible media of his radio and the comic books that lay scattered about his room, Davey met men who could speed through the air more quickly than light itself; who could lift buildings and mow down armies and capture master criminals. Could there be any comparison in Alexander's ability to fly on an eagle, or David's ingenuity in defeating Goliath, or Solomon's magic ring?

And the criminals! Did Ashmedai—the great Ashmedai, King of the Demons—did he possess political stooges, cosmic rays, interplanetary armies, and a constant supply of atom bombs?

I wanted to console the old man sitting beside me, playing with the crumbs. I felt a hurt compassion for him. I looked at his dark thin face and remembered vividly the glory that once surrounded his stories. And I felt a sad longing. I would never hear the story of Ashmedai again, for Ashmedai, the terrible King of the Demons, was dead.

Report from Eretz

By JACK J. COHEN

This is the first of a series of articles by Rabbi Jack J. Cohen, who is spending the present year in Jerusalem and devoting his time to post graduate studies at the Hebrew University. Rabbi Cohen is Director of Fellowship Activities of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, at present on leave of absence. He has consented to supply us from time to time with short articles conveying his impressions of what is going on in the Yishuv.
—The Editors

THE average American Jew no doubt assumes that being in Eretz Yisrael automatically makes a person better informed about the political developments concerning the Yishuv. Those, therefore, who are expecting from these reports of mine insights into the political events of the day will be disappointed. Little effort will be made to touch on the political scene. For the Pal-

estinian man on the street receives no more news about his country's political fate than does his American counterpart —and often less. There is less news space in Palestinian papers, and there is also frequent censorship. To cite just one instance of the censorship that is clamped on the press here, it was not until several days after the American press had reported Arab troop movements on the borders of Eretz Yisrael that the news was allowed to be published here. By that time, investigations had already revealed the Arab bluff.

These columns will give the impressions and reactions of an American Jew to life in Eretz Yisrael and will contain comments on religion, art, education, social experimentation, etc., as well as the lighter side of life. Readers may expect to find many criticisms of Palestinian institutions and thought. I permit myself this luxury of being free in criticism, for Zionism no longer needs any justification. Now that its growing pains are over, the Yishuv will continue to be strengthened and developed only by free and open analysis of its institutions and ideologies.

There are many things about Eretz Yisrael upon which I have no right to comment, and I shall therefore restrict my critical remarks to those areas of life in the Yishuv which can be evaluated with fairness by an objective observer. Take, for example, the question of whether people raised in average city homes can *really* be happy in the *kevutzah* without the precious privacy of those homes? I have heard dogmatic comments to the effect that the *kevutzah* can never produce happy people, that it can exist as an institution only because its members are ready to sacrifice even their right to personal happiness. A question like this can be answered only by those who have experienced *kevutzah* life or by those who have studied the reactions of a good cross-section of the *kevutzah* population. I shall try to avoid giving opinions, where such opinions are uncalled for.

THE PLEA FOR ALIYAH

The main burden of this installment is the need for an immigration movement (*aliyah*) from the United States, for this is uppermost in the minds of the Jews here.

Americans Wanted

It takes only one or two conversations with the average person in Eretz Yisrael to grasp how much the Yishuv hopes for an influx of American Jewish settlers. Every Jew will tell you that the Yishuv appreciates American Jewry's financial support, but that a greater contribution would be a flow of American youth to Eretz Yisrael. There is a crying need for manpower on all fronts. Agricultural colonies suffer from lack of workers, and even the influx of European Jews may not solve the problem. For many of these sufferers from Hitler's concentration camps are tired of communal living. Communal dining rooms or living quarters, however satisfactory they may be to the free, pioneering people of the *kibbutzim,* have terrible associations for those who have emerged from the enforced communal living of Hitler's camps. These unfortunates want clothes of their own, and they want also the privacy and comforts of their own homes. Not all of them are ready to make further concessions to the needs of the hour.

Even were these future immigrants to be absorbed into the *kevutzot* and *kibbutzim* in sufficiently large numbers, there would still be a shortage of other settlers to develop the barren spots of Eretz Yisrael. It takes only a bus ride of a few hours to make one realize that the absorptive capacity of Eretz Yisrael is far from exhausted. The amount of land

being wasted for lack of cultivation is appalling.

Moreover, Eretz Yisrael needs the spirit of youth brought up in a free environment and needs also the skills that America has afforded its young people. I know, for example, of a chemist who is unable to secure work, even though there are positions available, the reason being that her training is not up to the latest standards. An American-trained chemist would probably find no such difficulty in gaining employment.

The Wrong Appeal for American Aliyah

It is for these reasons, plus of course the desire to strengthen the Yishuv as much as possible, that the efforts of the Palestinians to secure an American *aliyah* will be increased in the next few years. Reconstructionism supports such efforts, but it rejects the grounds on which many Palestinians propose to base their appeal to American Jewish youth.

I have had occasion to speak on American Jewry to youth groups in various parts of Eretz Yisrael. The question most often posed by the youth in all these discussions is the effect of anti-Semitism on the Jews of the United States. It is obvious that their education has led them to believe that an outbreak of virulent anti-Semitism is to be expected in America as soon as the next depression sets in. At that time, they believe, American Jewry will learn its lesson and see that life for Jews is impossible anywhere except in Eretz Yisrael. It is not my purpose here to reply to this assumption. I do feel, however, that it is incumbent on American Jewry to clarify its stand on this question to the Yishuv. For until it does, *shelihim* from Eretz Yisrael will continue to alienate American Jewish youth from the Zionist cause by repeating the old refrain that American democracy is not strong enough to resist the corrosive force of anti-Semitism.

Basic, also, in the appeal for *aliyah,* is the refusal to recognize the worth of life in the American Diaspora. This results mainly from ignorance of the real facts of American Jewish life. Palestinian Jews are concerned about the lack of information concerning Eretz Yisrael on the part of American Jews. Yet they themselves possess only distorted information about their American brothers. The Palestinians always express surprise when young American Jews come to Eretz Yisrael with excellent Hebrew backgrounds. The Yishuv has been taught only that American Jewry is being assimilated. Having come mostly from European countries, they cannot understand how it is possible for a "non-Jewish" land to provide fertile territory for Jewish creativity. Hence they are amazed that Jewish culture should find expression over an American radio network. In a review of Morton Wishengrad's "Eternal Light," Michael Eskolsky, writing in the *Palestine Post,* declares that what is surprising about the Eternal Light series is that it should have been broadcast at all in the United States. Since Eskolsky himself came from the States about fifteen years ago, one can see how the prevailing view about the Diaspora is impressed even on those who should know better.

Toward a Better Approach to American Jewry

It is not only lack of accurate information about American Jewry and its approaches to Judaism which is so unfortunate. Of greater concern to American Jews should be the feeling of so many Palestinians that they need not bestir themselves greatly to acquire knowledge of the American Jewish community. They maintain that Eretz Yisrael alone should

occupy the attention of all Jews. They argue that since Eretz Yisrael alone can solve the Jewish problem, it follows logically that it deserves the undivided support of world Jewry. On their part, Palestinians must not waste their energies on long term educational projects abroad that will bear no fruit.

Fortunately, there is a more sensible viewpoint which is rapidly gaining followers, particularly among those who have seen American Jewry at close hand in recent years. These people are aware that no *aliyah* movement is possible until American Jewry itself is strengthened. Joseph Baratz, veteran Zionist, in a recent issue of *Bakvutzah,* organ of the *Hever Hakoutzot,* declared that the time had come for the Yishuv to instruct its *shelihim* properly and to send them in some organized fashion. No longer can it afford to permit each party and institution to send its *shelihim* as money raisers who approach an American contributor with no regard for the latter's worth as a member of the Jewish people. *Shelihim* must understand their task as a sacred mission to help American Jewry become an informed and inspired Jewry. Only then will it be possible for them to influence Americans to join in the building of Eretz Yisrael. Similar statements are repeated in all of the responsible Palestinian journals.

Involved in this whole problem of *aliyah* is the serious matter of the cultural gap between the Jews of Eretz Yisrael and those of the United States. Despite the many common experiences and cultural ties which unite us, there is a fundamental cleavage in outlook which causes much misunderstanding by leading Palestinians, who underestimate the potentialities of American Jewry to develop its own Jewish culture. By way of example, I was told by Irma Lee Wolf, a member of the Reconstructionist Youth Institute and at present a participant here in the Jewish Agency's training course for youth from English-speaking countries, of the experience she and her friends had in presenting Judith and Ira Eisenstein's, "What Is Torah?" to a Palestinian audience. The Junior Hadassah members of the group had been asked to present one of their typical Oneg Shabbat programs and they responded by offering the popular cantata. After the presentation, the Palestinians were rather sharp in their criticism. They understood Torah to mean what the Orthodox Palestinians say it is (although none of the group leaders is Orthodox). They could not grasp the relationship between Roosevelt and Torah. Nor could they understand how Jews could include an American melody in a cantata about Torah. They scoffed at American democracy, reminding the girls of the treatment of the Negro—this being the first proposition in a logical series whose conclusion runs something like this: Therefore, anti-Semitism will force Jews to emigrate to Eretz Yisrael. This is typical of the thinking which underlies much of the appeal by Palestinians for *halutzim* from the United Sates. The Yishuv will continue to be disappointed in the failure of streams of Jews to come to Eretz Yisrael, until it begins to bridge the cultural gap which separates the two communities.

On its part, American Jewry must answer the challenge presented to it. If it does have a stake in the future of Eretz Yisrael, then it owes its support to the Yishuv. American Jews must therefore think through a philosophy of Zionism that will assist both the development of the Yishuv and American Judaism. Among the questions which such a philosophy must consider are the following: Must Judaism be centered only in Eretz Yisrael? If not, what values for Judaism

are to be derived from life in the Diaspora? Of what benefit to the Yishuv would a strong American Jewish community be? Would an *aliyah* movement from the United States weaken American Judaism? Can such a movement ever be a mass movement? What techniques should be employed in the creation of an *aliyah* movement?

The Yishuv will continue to challenge Jews throughout the world to assist in the building of a newer and better Judaism. We must be ready to respond to that challenge, accepting that which is worthwhile and substituting our own methods for insuring the creative survival of the Jewish people where we disagree with the Yishuv.

ABOUT BUSES

Eretz Yisrael grows on one from day to day. Aside from the weighty concerns of the movement, there are the delightful experiences that multiply to give one a taste of Jewish "normalcy." Take, for example, the Egged bus (or any one of the Palestinian bus systems). Perhaps it is a mistake to speak of normalcy in connection with an Egged bus, especially after one has ridden at break-neck speed, dodging camels, cows and donkeys, and dashing in and out of line around bends in the road. But it is refreshing to an American Jew to meet up with this new creation of normalized Jewry, the bus driver. I speak here particularly of the Egged drivers, for it is Egged which has put its stamp on the minds of most Palestinian drivers. Egged, to those uninitiated, is a cooperative transport company, operated by and for its workers. It takes care of most of the long distance traveling in Eretz Yisrael.

The Egged bus passengers resemble a large family out for a picnic—but a family composed of a variety of people. There is the Jew of the old quarters of Jerusalem, dressed in the traditional garb of Eastern Europe—*kapotte, streimel* and *peyot* that flow in the breeze. Besides him sits his direct opposite, the young *kibbutznik* in shorts, khaki shirt and tembel) also known as *kova tipesh,* "dunce cap"), the latter being an excellent covering from the hot sun. There is always some one nearby with a brief case, traveling for business reasons, although the Palestinian brief case often contains more than books or papers. Occasionally, a woman will board the bus with a case full of vegetables. Near the middle door stands an Arab or a Jew with some large bundles over which everyone has to climb in order to leave the bus. Then there is the young child who usually causes the bus to stop *en route* for reasons obvious to all. And finally, there is the American tourist who is easily recognized by his necktie, his English or his *mivta angli* (English accent) and his ubiquitous camera. The latter is discussed aloud by the whole bus, the argument usually revolving about the price. No one in Eretz Yisrael is at all bashful about speaking about you in your presence, even though you are not a party to the conversation.

Egged drivers are frequently engaged as mail carriers and will drop letters off at spots they are familiar with. They are often asked to perform such missions by utter strangers, who have learned to trust their honesty implicitly. A bus driver here is always ready to serve. I recall once being on a bus which had started down the road at the usual speed. No American bus would (or could) ever have stopped after having picked up such momentum. Not so, Egged. The driver saw an elderly woman, at the side of the road, waving a package. Jam went the brakes. The woman handed the package through an open window to one of the passengers with the request, *"Ten l'Hirsch,"* ("Give it to Hirsch"). No one knew Hirsch, but

everyone called out his name until he made his presence known. Thereafter, everyone on the bus took advantage of the opportunity to become acquainted, and the conversation became very lively. But Hirsch, a little old Jew, in the rear of the bus sat quietly while everyone discussed his *mazzal* at having received his package. Everyone took the event as a matter of course, but as for me, I found it at the time particularly heart-warming. This was a Jewish bus.

"DIOGENES OF NATIONS"

(After Mendele Mokher Sefarim)

By LOUIS I. NEWMAN

In Ghetto days our life seemed dark and bleak,
But beauty dwelt beneath its wretched mask;
A mighty spirit raised the bent and meek,
A breath divine exalted every task.

From time to time it fluttered in our soul;
'Mid storms and whirlwinds from the world outside,
It made the Tent of Jacob strong and whole,
And alien dross was cleansed and purified.

"Diogenes of Nations" is the name
Which Israel has won in history;
On hostile highways is his seat of shame,
His arms constricted and his limbs unfree.

But unto Heaven his head forever towers,
In meditation deep on God and man;
He scorns the arrogance of earthly powers,
And hails the sunlight in God's righteous plan.

Beneath the dust and ashes burns a fire
With light and warmth for us and all mankind;
The Torah is the legacy entire
Our children cherish in their heart and mind.

A life like this is fit for domicile
Within the records of the human race,
To live, undimmed from age to age, until
The glow of truth illumine every face.

Random Thoughts

SOME people's notion of a house of worship is a place where, after parking your mind, you walk into your feelings.

* * *

Disraeli wrote in Coningsby: "I observe a party in the state whose rule it is to consent to no change, until it is clamorously called for, and then instantly to yield; but these are concessionary not conservative principles."

That sums up in a nutshell what's wrong with the principle of "Catholic Israel" as a formula for Conservative Judaism.

What "Catholic Israel" advocates is a Concessionary not a Conservative Judaism.

* * *

It is much harder to be right than consistent.

* * *

A good deal of religious controversy consists in quarreling over bottles that have long been emptied of their wine.

* * *

Neither the Jewish sculptor Antokolsky's "Ivan the Terrible," nor Michaelangelo's "Moses," nor Shakespeare's Shylock is Jewish art.

Art is neither racial nor topical; it is entirely cultural.

Jewish art is art which Jews help to bring forth in the course of cultivating their Jewish heritage.

That is why Maurice Schwartz's "Shylock the Jew," is a Jewish art creation, and of great distinction at that.

* * *

Propaganda aims to influence people's wants, so that they come to be the same as those of the propagandists.

Conventional education aims to increase people's knowledge, so that it compares favorably with that of the educators.

That accounts for the virtual impotence of conventional education as a moulder of character.

The ideal education would strive to increase people's knowledge so that they would learn to want what they really need.

* * *

Measured by the cultural difference which a college education makes in the lives of most of the college graduates, they might as well have bought their diplomas.

* * *

In human experience, God appears under various disguises, some of which seem as though they were intended to keep us guessing whether He exists at all.

Organized religion is supposed to be the one disguise which is to do nothing more than to prevent us from being blinded by His glory.

Actually, however, organized religion often has the effect of blinding us to His glory.

* * *

There is a Rabbinic saying that one who is bitten by a snake is frightened at the sight of a rope.

That should remind us that we must not permit our bitter experiences with fanatical religion and insane nationhood to frighten us into assuming that there can be no rational religion nor sane nationhood.

M. M. K.

CORRESPONDENCE

In Reply to Mr. Cohen's Strictures Against American Jewish Educators

Sirs:

Were it not that Mr. Frank Cohen has rendered life-long service to American Jewish education and to Palestine, his recent letter to the RECONSTRUCTIONIST would deserve no special attention. It is a hasty condemnation of the Jewish educational profession, without analysis of issues or facts. But the signatory as well as the publication warrant making the following explanation:

1—It is common knowledge that among American Jewish educators there are differences of opinion not only as regards method, but also as regards fundamental aims in Jewish education. To assume that statements or resolutions not in agreement with our particular aims are "impertinent," is certainly not in the spirit of the American democracy which we profess.

2—As is well known, there are among us *sholele hagalut* who negate the Diaspora and consider it as exile, however pleasant; and there are *mehayyeve hagolah,* affirming the positive Jewish values of the Diaspora, and believing in the continuous importance of Jewish community life the world over, even after the Jewish State in Palestine is established. The subject has been openly debated among Jewish thinkers and educators for two generations. To be shocked by this difference of opinion is surprisingly naive. It is not the Educational Conference in Jerusalem which has brought forth the conflict in aim. This conflict has existed in our midst for a long time, and will probably continue to be debated honestly and earnestly for many years to come.

The leaders of Reconstructionism, the Jewish Education Committee, the American Association for Jewish Education, the National Council for Jewish Education, and others, have done and will continue to do everything within their power to convince Jewish teachers and parents that America, so long as it remains truly democratic, is home for many generations of American Jews who will choose to make it their home. But as Americans, those of us who believe in Jewish education for American Jewish life and are convinced of its great future, culturally and spiritually, will nevertheless fight for the right of our colleagues to their point of view—wrong though we may consider it.

3—There are many good American citizens, Jewish and non-Jewish, who believe in the parochial school. Many more believe in private schools, at least for their own children. That American Jews have been encouraging Hebrew day schools as non-public schools, and have been supporting them from private and group funds, should not be "shocking" news to one of such wide communal experience as Mr. Cohen. There are 65 such schools in New York City; probably close to 100 in the United States. Some of our best Jewish schools in America are of this type; and the movement in their favor has been gaining rapidly. Unfortunately, some of those who cry out against these schools in America are the first to undermine the common public school by sending their own children to private schools. One may be opposed to non-public schools; but it is arrogating to oneself too much to decide glibly that they are un-American. To the contrary, the Supreme Court of the United States of America, in its famous Oregon Schools decision, declared definitely and officially that such schools are quite American.

4—There is no basis in fact for assuming that at the Jerusalem Conference, "Jews from Poland, Roumania, etc." *imposed* or tried to impose *anything* on Jewish education in the U. S. A. In this error Mr. Cohen was misled by the editorial in the RECONSTRUCTIONIST of October 17. The facts are that the only principle which was accepted at the Conference as binding on all organizations and individuals who wish to participate in World Union, is that they should desire "Jewish education to be Hebraic and Zionist in the spirit of the Torah and of the classic Jewish tradition," and that they should seek to work for such education within the programs of their activity. It is clear that this formulation of aim is naturally subject to differences of individual and group interpretation. It was also definitely stated that throughout the world, community educational organizations will necessarily have to work with other local educational forms as well.

But while this general aim was posited as basic for those who wish to affiliate with the World Union, all other resolutions were understod to be only specific suggestions, expressing the wishes of the majority present at that particular conference. But there is nothing either "obsequious" or "frightening" in Americans meeting with Jewish educators from other parts of the world, and exchanging opinions with them; even though they do not accept all our opinions, as we do not accept theirs. We Americans too must learn to practice democracy. Hasty indignation and unfounded accusations in the name of what is "un-American," are neither democratic nor helpful. They are like bomerangs, returning to him who slings them. From men like Mr. Cohen, we expect more carefully considered judgment and more helpful evaluation.

For the National Council of Jewish Education,

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